

# The Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnerships Project

The Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnerships Project helps educators, parents and community members develop partnerships by providing training, topical workshops, a newsletter, and a collection of books, videos and other resources. The project is designed to promote policies and programs at the local level and to increase public awareness of the positive impact of school-family-community partnerships on student learning. This work is guided by the principle that all families have strengths and play a critical role in their children's educational success.

Led by the State Department of Education, SERC and CT Parents Plus of the United Way of Connecticut, the Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnerships Project has been working to increase family and community involvement since 1995. The Project provides a variety of professional development activities. Half-day overviews introduce research and basic principles of effective partnerships. A two-day training session for school-based Action Teams supports schools that are ready to implement coordinated partnership programs. And Partnerships in Action networking workshops apply the partnership perspective to specific topics such as parent-teacher conferences, comprehensive school health, involving fathers in children's education, or community involvement.

Technical assistance is provided to trained school teams and others through telephone and electronic communication, presentations, resources and on-site visits. The *Policy Action Packet for School-Family-Community Partnerships* was developed to assist schools and districts meet the requirements of Public Act 97-290 which directs school districts to institute a policy on school-family communication.

Connecticut was among the first states to join the National Network of Partnership Schools, and has been recognized with a Partnership State Award for excellent state leadership in developing comprehensive partnership programs.

Established by Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University, the National Network brings together schools, districts and states committed to advancing coordinated programs of school-family-community partnerships. The National Network has been recognized as a successful, research-based project in publications such as *Tools for Schools* (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, USDE, 1998) and *Reclaiming Our Nation At Risk* (Lloyd, K. & Ramsey, D., 1998).

Other resources include a library collection to help schools develop and implement partnership policies and programs, and raise awareness. An annotated bibliography is disseminated statewide, informing readers that resources are available for loan free of charge at the state's centrally located library for special education and family support material at SERC.

In addition, the *Schools and Families* newsletter is mailed twice a year to over 4000 readers statewide. Each issue centers on a theme such as violence prevention, technology, or health literacy. The newsletter includes information on research, best practices from Connecticut schools, districts or communities, and a list of web, library or free resources.

For more information about the Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnerships Project, please contact Wendy Harwin, (860) 807-2105, [sde.partnership@po.state.ct.us](mailto:sde.partnership@po.state.ct.us).